

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicant rewrites claim 12 in independent form including all limitations of its base claim, and cancels claims 1, 2, and 11, without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter thereof. Applicant has also amended claims 6, 13, and 14 to correct informalities. Claims 3-10 and 12-17 remain currently pending.

In the Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 3-10 and 13-17. The Examiner objected to claim 12, but indicated that claim 12 recites allowable subject matter. The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0158789 to Yoshioka ("Yoshioka"); and rejected claims 2 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshioka in view U.S. Patent No. 5,568,142 to Velazquez.¹

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 3-10 and 13-17 and for pointing out allowable subject matter in claim 12. Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's objection and rejections. However, to expedite the prosecution of this application, Applicant has rewritten claim 12 in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and canceled claims 1, 2, and 11. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection to claim 12. Further, because claims 1, 2, and 11 have been canceled, the rejections of claims 1, 2, and 11 are moot. Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicant declines to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

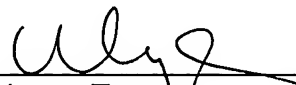
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests the timely allowance of the pending claims and issuance of the Notice of Allowance.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: November 8, 2006

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